

ROUTES AND ROOTS

VOLUME ONE



HUMAN SECURITY APPROACH

AGRICULTURE & MIGRATION

BORDER MANAGEMENT

Saving Lives,
Driving Solutions
For People on the Move

 **IOM** | DOMINICA
UN MIGRATION

DECEMBER 2024

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HEAD OF OFFICE



Natasha Greaves

Welcome to this special edition of our magazine, where we explore the theme "Routes and Roots" through the lens of migration management in Dominica. This beautiful island, known for its lush landscapes and vibrant culture, is a microcosm of the broader Caribbean migration experience. Here, the journeys of migrants—our "routes"—intertwine with the deep connections they form in their new home—our "roots."

Dominica's strategic location makes it a significant hub for migration, attracting individuals seeking economic opportunities, safety, and family reunification. These movements enrich our island's cultural tapestry, bringing diverse skills and perspectives that enhance our community. However, this dynamic also presents challenges such as irregular migration, human trafficking, and the need for robust border management.

Addressing these issues requires a coordinated effort from the government, international organizations, and civil society.

Effective migration management in Dominica involves creating safe and regular pathways for migrants, protecting their rights, and fostering their integration into our society. It also means harnessing the potential of our diaspora, whose contributions through remittances, skills, and investments are vital for our island's development.

In this edition, we delve into the multifaceted aspects of migration management in Dominica. We share inspiring success stories of migrants who have overcome adversity and made significant contributions to our community. We highlight innovative policies and collaborative efforts that are making a difference.

Join us as we navigate the complexities of migration in Dominica and celebrate the steps being taken to create a more inclusive and prosperous future for all. Together, we can appreciate the rich diversity that migration brings and work towards a brighter tomorrow.

02

THE TEAM



Dale Joseph
Head of Resource
Management

As Head of Resource Management for IOM Dominica, Dale Joseph oversees the financial, human resources, procurement, and administrative functions of the mission, ensuring the efficient and effective use of resources to support programmatic goals. Her role involves strategic planning, budget management, compliance with organizational policies, and fostering partnerships to optimize resource allocation. With a strong commitment to accountability and sustainability, she works closely with local and regional counterparts to ensure compliance with IOM policies and donor requirements while fostering a collaborative and results-driven work environment.



Sherma Oscar
Finance Assistant

Sherma Oscar, a Finance Assistant at IOM Dominica, plays a crucial role in ensuring the organization's financial integrity. Her work involves processing transactions, preparing financial reports, and maintaining accurate records. One of her most impactful experiences was assisting migrant communities affected by Hurricane Maria. Despite the devastation, she witnessed the resilience of survivors and the positive impact of IOM's aid efforts. This experience solidified her commitment to supporting those in need and highlighted the importance of humanitarian work.



Viola Pascal
Project Coordinator

Viola Pascal, a dedicated Project Coordinator at IOM Dominica, has been instrumental in advancing human security and addressing the challenges of migration and displacement in the Caribbean region. Through her work on the Human Security Joint Programme, she has contributed to increased understanding of the complex relationship between disasters, climate change, and human mobility. By empowering communities and supporting vulnerable populations, Pascal has made a significant impact on the lives of many. Her commitment to fostering inclusive and sustainable societies reflects the core values of the International Organization for Migration.



Vynliz Dailey
Project Coordinator

Vynliz Dailey serves as a Project Coordinator with extensive experience in migration data collection, research, and project management in Dominica and the Eastern Caribbean. With a focus on social protection, migration governance, border management, migrant integration, and labour migration. Vynliz has developed and implemented projects, reviewed publications, and supported knowledge management systems. She has also contributed to migration research and policy development and fostering partnerships with local and regional bodies including governments.

Over the years she has enjoyed learning about how cross-cutting and multifaceted migration is. For the longest time, she thought of migration in a fairly narrow sense - people traveling for work opportunities or leisure. However, working with IOM she has realised that migration touches on issues like climate change, conflict, economic inequality, human rights, health, and even demographic shifts. She also came to understand that migration is not just about movement but also about the challenges and opportunities it creates for countries of origin, transit, and destination.





**SAVING
LIVES.
DRIVING
SOLUTIONS**

**FOR PEOPLE
ON THE
MOVE**

03

ISLAND JOURNEYS: THREADS OF RESILIENCE AND BELONGING IN DOMINICA

In today's interconnected world, migration is a significant and often necessary journey for millions seeking better opportunities, safety, and a new place to call home. However, the quest for a sense of belonging in a foreign land can be fraught with challenges. Migrants face the daunting task of navigating unfamiliar cultural landscapes, overcoming language barriers, and finding acceptance within new communities.

Fostering a sense of belonging is crucial for the successful integration of migrants into host societies. Article 15 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights underscores the right to nationality, emphasizing the importance of belonging to a community. This intrinsic human need for acceptance and inclusion is not just a personal struggle but a collective societal responsibility, one that has significant implications for social cohesion and stability.

This article explores the experiences of three migrants as they strive to establish a sense of belonging in their new homes, shedding light on both the obstacles they face and the resilience they demonstrate.

ARACELES' JOURNEY TO DOMINICA

Araceles moved to Dominica over 20 years ago. She was told by a friend that the island had job opportunities, so she packed up her salon in the Dominican Republic, booked her ticket with a travel agent, said goodbye to her family, and left for the Nature Isle, leaving behind her youngest daughter, Thakira. "I am skilled in hair so I would travel between the communities from St. Joseph to Roseau blow drying and styling hair for EC\$20 each," Araceles recalls. It would be a few years before she could open her salon. "Mr. Paul helped me. After working for two years with a local business owner, he told me he could open a salon for me."

For Araceles, learning the language was a significant struggle. "I could not speak English and people would say nasty things to me. I didn't know at first what they said, but eventually I would pick up some of the slangs they used. It made me sad, but I wanted to be able to go back to get my children, so I worked hard."

Araceles recalls that it was not difficult for her to get and maintain status in Dominica. After renewing her work permit seven times, she was eligible for resident status. "Every year I paid EC\$500 to renew my permit. I was happy when I got resident status because I could finally go to Santo Domingo to visit my family." Araceles was able to reconnect with her daughter, Thakira and start the process of having her move to Dominica.

THAKIRA'S JOURNEY TO DOMINICA

Thakira's journey was different from her mother's. She was ten years old when she learned that she would be leaving for Dominica.

"I was scared because my father wasn't coming with me and I would have to travel with a flight attendant," explains Thakira. "But I was excited to finally be with my mum," she reminisces. "It felt like the longest journey from Santo Domingo to Antigua and then on to Dominica."

Once in Dominica, she was later registered into school, which would commence in a few months. Araceles enlisted someone to help Thakira learn English, but the language barrier posed many challenges. Settling into her new environment was difficult for young Thakira. "I missed the food from the Dominican Republic, I didn't like broth, and the students at school bullied me because of how I spoke English." As she got older Thakira resented her culture and didn't want to be around other Latinos. "People would come up to me and ask me how much I am charging for 15 minutes. They treated me like I was a working girl, so I stopped hanging around other Spanish people because I feel like I am a part of Dominica."

Thakira recently received her passport after living in Dominica for nearly sixteen years. "It was the best day of my life. I went to school all my life here, I do all things like a Dominican. I love when I am called a 'shabine,' a term used to describe a light-complexion woman, because I feel like I belong. Dominica is quiet, and I can walk around and feel safe."

A NEW HOME

Her mother, Araceles, shared the same sentiments. "I like everything in Dominica, the food, the fish, the market. I made many friends and I love it here. Dominica is my home."

The stories of Araceles and Thakira illustrate the profound challenges and triumphs that shape the migrant experience. Their resilience, the support they found within the Dominican community, and the deep human need to belong. Ultimately, these triumphs enrich not only the lives of migrants, but also the societies they join. Dominica became a home for Araceles and Thakira. Their stories are a testament to the power of community in fostering a sense of belonging. As Dominica's cultural tapestry continues to grow richer and more vibrant with each new arrival, one thing remains clear: a helping hand and an open heart can make all the difference in a migrant's journey.

DOMINICA IS HOME
MIGRATION MYTHS VS REALITY
IOM UN MIGRATION

Comprehensive, effective migration reform can only be achieved by understanding how migration works. It requires the debunking of migration myths and a focus on reality.

- MYTH** Foreigners take jobs and lower wages.
- REALITY** Labour demand is the biggest migration driver. Migrants often do the jobs locals won't.
- MYTH** Migrants move from rural areas and less developed countries to cities and more developed countries.
- REALITY** More migrants are moving to rural, and forested areas, and less developed countries to live simpler lives in nature and practice self-sufficient habits, like homesteading and farming.
- MYTH** Development is stymied when people emigrate from their home, or origin country because they take their education, earning potential, and skills with them.
- REALITY** Emigration aids development through remittances - the money labour migrants send home to families.



VIEW ONLINE

04

INVESTING IN WOMEN FOR GENDER EQUALITY AND SAFE MIGRATION

With efforts in play to shore up economic growth and development in Dominica, this International Women's Day, a spotlight is being shone on the role women, in particular, play in boosting the local economy.

Around the world, through its theme for International Women's Day 2024, UN Women has issued a challenge to forge a better world by inspiring others to understand and value women's inclusion.

Here in Dominica, the International Organization of Migration, in partnership with the Ministry of Labour, Public Service Reform, Social Partnerships, Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development, is seeking to do so by investing in women to accelerate progress for gender equality and safe migration.

“
Safe migration for me is where persons can move in and out of a country legally, without limitations.

Natasha Greaves

Head of Office for IOM, Dominica.

“Safe migration for me is where persons can move in and out of a country legally, without limitations,” said Natasha Greaves, Head of Office for IOM, Dominica. “Steps countries can take to achieve this include having policies and operating procedures, clearly and openly communicating the requirements when entering into the country, and the removal of stereotyping and any form of discrimination or xenophobia.”

Greaves stated that women on the move face greater challenges, such as exploitation and abuse, when compared to men, and as a result we need to advocate for policy makers to ensure the policies they develop do not disadvantage the woman or girl who is on the move, but rather, encourages them.

Given its small population, migration is vital to Dominica's economic development. By bridging the gap in an ageing population - migrant numbers enhance purchasing power and help to keep local businesses viable. Migrants also contribute significantly to the island's services sector, to farming and to establishing micro, small and medium-sized (MSME) businesses.

Gloria Joseph

Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Labour, Public Service Reform, Social Partnerships, Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development



“
We understand the offering to women-led businesses is vital, especially migrant-women-led businesses.

Cognisant of the financial and technical challenges some MSMEs face, the Ministry of Labour is focused on extending a helping hand to aid the viability and sustainability of both migrant and native-owned businesses, particularly those owned by women.

“We understand the offering to women-led businesses is vital, especially migrant-women-led businesses, since some of the traditional opportunities for employment - whether it is employment within a sector, or self employment - have been predominantly male driven, as in the construction industry, or the agriculture sector, said Gloria Joseph - Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Labour, Public Service Reform, Social Partnerships, Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development. “And so, it is important for us to look at migrant women as a sub grouping that may require some sort of attention and hand-holding,” she said.

To this end, The Ministry is also working with the IOM to develop a small business development training portfolio that will be targeted at women entrepreneurs. Several migrant women operate in the areas identified for training.

Native and migrant women in Dominica are also currently benefiting from a slate of training interventions that include marketing, social media, financial and human resource management and business management in general. Assistance is also being provided with developing business proposals, brochures, business plans and business cards. And loan facilities are available through the government at concessional rates to small businesses in every sector.

It is exactly this type of support that migrant entrepreneur Sonia Nestor, co-owner of Nestor’s Best Products, deems vital to ensuring other women can capitalise on the numerous business opportunities Dominica has to offer, and in so doing, help to boost the island’s economy and their respective communities.

Nestor, with her husband, migrated to Dominica from the UK in 2012 with dreams of living a simpler, nature-filled life.

Although her husband was born in Dominica, he emigrated to the UK at the age of eight. So the return to Dominica was tantamount to a migrant experience for them both, she said.

The support they received from government organizations like the Bureau of Standards, was crucial to ushering their business through a successful decade which saw them stocked by at least 20 stores on the island and considering export possibilities.



“In addition to the assistance we got from persons in government, we were also very fortunate to connect with people already in business who shared lots of information and advised us in the early stages,” Nestor said. “And because of these contacts we were able to join various associations like the Manufacturing’ Association and the Dominica Spa, Health & Wellness Association, which provided great networking opportunities. So I think it’s useful to get involved in local groups and associations where you can meet others.”

With efforts underway to measure the impact migrant women have on Dominica’s economy, Greaves, who is also a migrant, says if it’s done right, and with appropriate measures taken to foster inclusion, policy-driven migration can certainly play a role in ensuring Dominica maintains a trajectory of growth that is sustainable and beneficial for all.



VIEW ONLINE

The Essentials of Migration Data

To support countries in their efforts to equip government stakeholders with the knowledge and skills to work towards the production of a common evidence base on migration data, IOM's Global Data Institute, through its Global Migration and Data Analysis Centre (GMDAC), has developed a guide called **The Essentials of Migration Data (EMD)**. The EMD is based on a comprehensive review of available manuals, toolkits, and guidelines from IOM, other international organizations, national statistical offices, and academic institutions and on several consultations with data experts from IOM, other international organizations, and national statistical offices.

For the first time, this specialized training on migration data was launched in the Caribbean, in Dominica in December 2024. In many ways, the training represents IOM's commitment to building national capacities in migration data collection, analysis, and utilization. Dominica, known for its resilience and vibrant culture, provides the perfect setting for this initiative.

A person wearing a white protective suit is leaning over a table, examining a map of the Americas. The map is pinned to the table with several dark pushpins. The background is a bright, hazy outdoor scene with a building and a fence. The overall color palette is dominated by warm yellows and oranges, transitioning to cooler blues and greens in the foreground.

SECURING THE **BORDER**

05

Bolstering Border Security

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) has successfully completed a two-day training programme, held on September 9-10, 2024, aimed at equipping Dominica's immigration and law enforcement officers with the necessary skills to detect and respond to human trafficking. The training, hosted in Roseau, is part of IOM's broader efforts to strengthen border management and security while fostering safer communities in Dominica.

This initiative is particularly timely as Dominica's position as a Caribbean entry point places the country at the forefront of managing increasing regional and international migration. The training programme—specifically designed as part of IOM's Training-of-Trainers (ToT) initiative—brought together key players such as representatives from the Dominica Air and Sea Ports Authority (DASPA) and the Dominica Police Force. Participants were trained to recognize indicators of trafficking and effectively manage these cases, helping to enhance Dominica's border governance framework.

The training curriculum, carefully designed to address the growing threat of migrant smuggling, includes six detailed modules. The modules span core concepts of human trafficking, investigation techniques, and specific methods of smuggling by sea, air, and land. Importantly, the curriculum also highlights cooperation strategies among agencies to strengthen collective efforts to prevent and combat trafficking and smuggling.

Facilitators provided interactive training tools, including flashcards and mini quizzes, to reinforce learning, and ensure participants can cascade this knowledge to other officials.



Tinstia Haynes
IOM Facilitator

“

This training emphasized the often-overlooked crime of trafficking.

IOM Facilitator Tinstia Haynes highlighted the significance of the programme, stating, "While the focus in Dominica often leans towards smuggling, this training emphasized the often-overlooked crime of trafficking. By the end of the session, we saw remarkable growth in the participants' ability to identify trafficking scenarios."



Participants echoed the value of the training. Corporal of Police Pertrina Dupigny remarked, "It was enlightening to learn that all three factors —act, means, and purpose—must be present to identify human trafficking. As law enforcement, this training equips us with tools we don't use every day but are crucial in the fight against trafficking."

Cozier Charles, Acting Director of Security at DASPA, noted the practical relevance of the training to his work at the ports, saying, "The knowledge gained will allow us to improve policies and strategies to detect traffickers and protect potential victims."

Beyond immediate law enforcement, the impact of the training extends to the broader security of Dominica's borders and communities.



As trained participants share this expertise with other officials, it will strengthen their ability to intercept traffickers and disrupt smuggling operations, enhancing national security. The skills imparted will help officials address migration-related challenges with more precision and coordination, fostering safer ports of entry and increasing protection for vulnerable individuals.

By incorporating comprehensive tools for identifying trafficking and tackling migrant smuggling, the training is poised to positively impact Dominica's capacity to manage its borders, protect its communities, and combat the global issue of human trafficking.



VIEW ONLINE

06

ISLAND JOURNEYS: THE JOURNEY HOME: NAVIGATING MIGRATION, SOCIAL STRUGGLES, AND GIVING BACK

Migration is a complex phenomenon that has shaped societies for centuries. It's a journey marked by challenges, triumphs, and the enduring human spirit. For many, like Sheldon Alfred, an architectural acoustics consultant and musician, the decision to migrate is often driven by a desire to expand horizons, acquire knowledge, and gain experiences that aren't available in their home countries. However, the path is seldom straightforward and often involves facing social struggles that shape one's identity and future decisions.

Sheldon Alfred's story begins in Dominica, where his curiosity about architecture and how buildings are put together led him to pursue a building technology class in high school. Feeling that he had exhausted the educational opportunities available in Dominica, Sheldon moved to the United States to continue his studies in architecture at Morgan State University in Baltimore and later at Harvard University.



At Harvard, Sheldon encountered a turning point that would change his career path. A guest lecturer introduced him to architectural acoustics, a field that merges his passions for architecture and music. This "light bulb moment" ignited a new direction for Sheldon, but also placed him in a niche field that was largely unfamiliar to people, even within the architectural community.

Like many migrants, Sheldon faced social challenges upon moving to the United States. As a Black Caribbean man, he had to navigate the complexities of racial identity in a country with a deeply entrenched history of racism. Sheldon recounts feeling out of place at times, especially in predominantly white spaces where his presence was often met with surprise or skepticism. These experiences were compounded by the subtle and not-so-subtle micro-aggressions that are a common reality for many black individuals in America.

One particular incident illustrates the precarious nature of being a Black man in America. While out with friends, all of whom

were Black Caribbean men, a drunk Caucasian woman mistakenly entered their vehicle. A police officer, who happened to be Black, quickly intervened and warned them about how the situation might be perceived. "He didn't even know what happened," Sheldon recalls. "He was just like, 'Come on, guys,' as if saying, 'You should know better.'"

These moments of caution and hyper-awareness underscore the broader societal scrutiny that Black individuals often face in the United States, where even innocent situations can be misinterpreted, leading to dire consequences.

Despite the opportunities and experiences abroad, Sheldon eventually decided to return to Dominica. This decision was met with mixed reactions. Friends were supportive, but others questioned why he would leave behind a place like the United States, where his extensive education might afford him greater financial opportunities.

For Sheldon, the decision to return was about more than just career prospects. "I have a lot of roots, financial roots, musical roots, domestic roots, biological roots," he explains. Returning to Dominica was about honouring these connections and laying the groundwork for future growth, both for himself and his community.

In Dominica, Sheldon is working to educate people about the value of architectural acoustics, a field that is still relatively unknown in the region. He hopes to make a difference by helping local builders and designers understand how acoustics can impact human comfort and well-being.

Sheldon's journey highlights a common theme among many migrants who return to their home

countries: the desire to give back. Having gained valuable knowledge and experiences abroad, Sheldon feels a sense of responsibility to contribute to the development of his home country. "I consult for firms in the United States, but my professional development mission is to allow people in Latin America and the Caribbean to learn about the field of acoustics and value it in design," he says.

Returning home also allows Sheldon to reconnect with his roots and continue pursuing his passions. As a member of a local band, he finds fulfillment in creating music and sharing it with his community. "We are young men, and we haven't reached the fullest of our potentials yet," he says, emphasizing the importance of being present and active in his home country.

Sheldon Alfred's story is a testament to the complexities of migration, the social struggles that come with adapting to new environments, and the deep-seated desire to give back to one's home country. It underscores the importance of education, resilience, and the pursuit of passions, even when faced with challenges. For many migrants like Sheldon, the journey is not just about leaving home but also about finding a way back and making a meaningful impact in the place that shaped them.



VIEW ONLINE



D

ocument Examination AND FORGERY

In a major step toward enhancing Dominica's border management capabilities, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Dominica recently facilitated a comprehensive training on Document Examination and Forgery Detection. Held at the National Development Foundation of Dominica Ltd (NDFD) Conference Room on Wednesday, September 18th, 2024, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., the training was designed to equip government officials, law enforcement officers, and front-line personnel with advanced skills to identify counterfeit and forged documents.

The event was led by Dr. Mohamed Awadalla, an internationally recognized Forgery Detection Consultant and Trainer with over 30 years of experience. Dr. Awadalla has held key positions, including General Manager of the Forgery Detection Department at Egypt's Forensic Medicine Authority and Chief of the Forgery Detection Unit at the Forensic Lab in the RAK Police, UAE, bringing an extensive background of expertise to the session.

As the first training of its kind in Dominica, this event underscored the nation's dedication to strengthening its response to document fraud and human trafficking.



Dr. Mohamed Awadalla
IOM Facilitator

“
The group was highly interactive, and it was a fantastic course.”

Key topics covered in the training included:

- Introduction to Forgery and Document Counterfeiting: Participants learned to classify various types of official documents, including IDs and passports, while gaining insight into common forgery practices.
- In-Depth Analysis of Identification Documents: The training offered a detailed examination of ID documents and passports, focusing on materials, printing techniques, assembly processes, and security features. The use of biometric authentication methods was also discussed.
- Forgery Detection Techniques: Practical sessions allowed participants to develop hands-on skills in identifying alterations and fraudulent features in IDs and passports.



Dr. Awadalla expressed his enthusiasm for the session, stating, "The group was highly interactive, and it was a fantastic course. It was a long day, but I am very pleased with this group and excited that this was the first training of its kind in Dominica."

IOM Dominica Head of Office Natasha Greaves added, "The impact of this training extends far beyond immediate outcomes; it signifies a broader commitment to resilience, adaptability, and continuous improvement in our collective efforts to combat document fraud in Dominica."

This training is part of IOM Dominica's ongoing efforts to enhance the country's capacity to detect and prevent human trafficking, document fraud, and other transnational crimes. By equipping government and law enforcement officials with critical forgery detection skills, Dominica is taking a significant step toward safeguarding its borders and maintaining the integrity of its institutions.

The success of this initiative opens the door for future capacity-building collaborations between IOM Dominica and local government agencies.



VIEW ONLINE

08

ISLAND JOURNEYS: WHAT IS IT LIKE BEING A FOREIGN STUDENT IN DOMINICA?

In the grand narrative of our interconnected world, an extraordinary revelation takes centre stage: one in 30 individuals around the globe identifies as a migrant, a poignant reflection of the diverse stories that shape our shared human experience. As unveiled by data from the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in 2022 this revelation peels back the layers on a myriad of compelling stories, where individuals navigate the complex currents of life. From navigating the shadows of conflict, persecution, or environmental hurdles to chasing the elusive promises of employment, economic opportunities, familial ties, or educational aspirations, the motivations propelling individuals across borders tell a captivating tale of ambition, resilience, and the ceaseless pursuit of a brighter future.

Dominica has played host to migrants from diverse corners of the world. For almost four decades, the island has served as a home for American students pursuing medical studies at the renowned Ross University Medical School, until its relocation following Hurricane Maria.

Over the past two decades, with the establishment of the All-Saints School of Medicine, migrant students from Africa and Asia have flocked to Dominica, seeking an accelerated path to their medical degrees. Among them are Miracle and Charles, who ventured from Nigeria to Dominica to pursue their medical education.

Miracle clarifies her intent, stating, "I did not come here in search of greener pastures. I came here to study medicine because it's a shorter time. I didn't want to study for 10 years."

"I came from a comfortable home, and my parents were willing to pay my tuition." Charles, armed with a degree in microbiology, saw pursuing a medical degree in Dominica as a more time-efficient and cost-effective option, as per his parents' decision.

Despite their shared goal and a similar immigration process to a Commonwealth country like Nigeria, their journey brought forth cultural shocks. Leaving behind life, family, and friends in Africa, they embarked on a transatlantic journey to the small island of Dominica. The journey to Dominica took two days for both Charles and Miracle who had to travel to a few countries before getting to Dominica. Miracle recounts, "I did not do my research and thought all along I was going to the Dominican Republic. I was naive."

Upon arriving in the city of Roseau, Dominica, Charles experienced a sense of déjà vu reminiscent of rural areas in Lagos. The initial absence of open shops stirred thoughts of returning home. However, after the initial adjustment period, he found solace in the serene atmosphere, remarking, "I soon recognized - I'm



not hearing the buzzing of generators [as in Nigeria]. The traffic and all that kind of stuff that we need to go through to get to work or where we have to go to, was gone, so I said 'ok' and began to relax."

Though they eventually acclimated to their new surroundings, the journey was not without challenges. Language barriers, a common hurdle for migrants, prompted both Miracle and Charles to navigate the process of learning a new language. Charles, a fluent English speaker, discovered that his dialect was not universally understood. "It took me six months for most people to understand me; I had to start listening to locals speak so I could learn to pronounce certain words differently," he notes.

Miracle encountered what she describes as xenophobia shortly after arriving on the island, recounting instances of people questioning her presence with remarks like 'Why you in my country? Go back.' She reflects, "There are people that will literally ask you, 'Why [are] you in my country? Go back.' I have been told, 'Typical of your kind to do that.' That happens a lot." Charles also experienced being told, "Oh, you come out where you come out." Seeking a sense of community in their new home, Miracle found hers among fellow students at the university, actively participating in school events and volunteering for various positions.

Charles, on the other hand, created a network by connecting with other Nigerians on the island and making Dominican friends. "One of the first friends I made was my landlady and her family. We are still friends today. I started working for them. They started giving me responsibilities. They've entrusted a lot of things to my care," shares Charles.

While both Miracle and Charles missed their families, they also longed for their traditional meals. Charles reminisces, "I missed my pounded yam, I missed my Egusi soup and Jollof rice." He adapted by ordering indigenous African ingredients from America. In contrast, Miracle found herself embracing the cuisine in Dominica, particularly expressing her love for dishes like crab callaloo. She observes, "You see things like pig foot soup? With some pumpkin or some beef soup? Oh my God, I cook it now. I love it."

Miracle developed an affinity for Roseau, admiring its navigable layout and the inviting character of its lanes. However, she often grapples with a sense of being treated as a second-class citizen, particularly in aspects like the immigration processes in Dominica. She expresses frustration over systemic disparities that take a toll, citing examples like the discrepancies in nursing license fees. While Dominicans pay \$400 for the registration and \$200 for the registered nurse license, migrants like her are charged significantly more, with the total amounting to \$1250 for the same registration and license. This discrepancy, without any additional rewards, poses challenges that she finds difficult to navigate.

On the contrary, Charles has experienced favourability with the renewals of his permits and his settlement in Dominica. Following the completion of his degree, he transitioned into a role as a practicing medical professional, married with children, and now regards Dominica as his home. Charles expresses genuine love for Dominica and has no regrets about his decision to move there. He acknowledges the evolution of Dominica over time, recognizing it as a lovely place. While acknowledging that improvements can still be made, he asserts that Dominica is a good place to raise a family.



[VIEW VIDEO](#)



INTEGRATING THE HUMAN SECURITY APPROACH IN DISASTER DISPLACEMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL MIGRATION POLICIES IN THE EASTERN CARIBBEAN

Phase II of the Joint Programme will enhance the integration of human security in addressing environmental migration, disaster displacement, and risk management across the Caribbean. It aims to promote regional ownership and ensure the sustainability of resources developed in Phase I. The initiative emphasizes a comprehensive approach to disaster resilience and migration challenges.



Say No to violence against Women

Human Security for all.

PROTECTION

EMERGENCY

FREEDOM FROM: FEAR WANT THE RIGHT TO LIVE IN IDENTITY

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Phase two of Joint Programme on Human Security in Disaster Displacement and Disaster Risk Reduction in the Caribbean Region

The Joint Programme on “Promoting a Human Security Approach to Disaster Displacement, Environmental Migration, and Disaster Risk Reduction in the Caribbean Region” is proud to announce the commencement of Phase 2 of its initiative. Building upon the success of Phase 1, that supported the development of resources to manage disaster displacement, this programme aims to further integrate the human security perspective into environmental migration, and disaster risk management interventions across the Caribbean.

Phase I of the Joint Programme, titled “Integrating the Human Security Approach in Disaster Displacement and Environmental Migration Policies in the Eastern Caribbean,” made significant strides in enhancing guidance resources for managing disaster displacement and cross-border evacuation in the OECS region. Most OECS countries, in 2023 signed off on the new High-Level Ministerial Declaration for Migration Environment and Climate Change. This declaration reaffirms OECS Governments’ commitment to proactively address human mobility linked to climate related hazards, considering the human security approach.



Viola Pascal, Project Manager for the Joint Programme, expressed her enthusiasm for Phase 2, stating, “It will focus on supporting greater buy-in and uptake from the stakeholders across the region. We will continue to promote an increase in awareness on human mobility and disaster linked to climate change in the region through the lens of the human security approach. By working with our new implementing partner, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, we have strengthened partnership for DRR. We have also added multi-hazard early warning system consideration to this initiative.”

BEST PRACTICES

ON PROTECTION OF PERSONS
CROSSING BORDERS DUE TO
**DISASTERS, ENVIRONMENTAL
DEGRADATION AND CLIMATE
CHANGE IN THE EASTERN
CARIBBEAN**

Countries are allowed to
evacuate their respective
nationals for greater safety.

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Our aim is to reduce insecurities and bolster resilience in Caribbean communities, businesses, and institutions. Our approach prioritizes people.

Jair Torres, UNDRR

Programme Management Officer at the United Nations office for Disaster Risk Reduction in the Americas (UNDRR), Jair Torres, emphasized the importance of this initiative, stating, "The role of UNDRR, apart from ensuring a good understanding of disasters—whether natural, social or socio-natural in origin—is pivotal in this project. Our aim is to reduce insecurities and bolster resilience in Caribbean communities, businesses, and institutions. Our approach prioritizes people."

The programme is being implemented by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) in collaboration with the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Commission and the Platform on Disaster Displacement (PDD) under the guidance of the Resident Coordinators Office for Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean. The joint programme is funded by the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security.

PHASE 2 OF THE JOINT PROGRAMME AIMS TO ACHIEVE TWO MAIN OUTCOMES:

- Increased awareness among regional agencies, national governments, and communities about the human security approach in addressing issues related to human mobility, climate change, and disasters in the Caribbean Region.
- Enhanced systems and capacities for disaster risk management to support adaptation to climate change and environmental degradation on human mobility through a human security perspective.

People may migrate
temporarily to stay with
relatives until the
perceived danger subsides.

**Governments play a
significant role in the dialogue
with potential host countries.**



VIEW ONLINE

0



ISLAND JOURNEYS: HAITIAN ROOTS, DOMINICAN DREAMS

Jean Claude Millen's journey from Haiti to Dominica is a powerful example of resilience, adaptability, and the benefits of well-managed migration. His story reveals how structured migration processes, coupled with a welcoming local culture, can lead to meaningful integration into a new society and the enrichment of both the migrant and the host country.

Jean Claude's decision to move to Dominica was rooted in family ties. Invited by his sister and cousin, he arrived on the island without knowing much about it. However, he was immediately struck by the peace and safety Dominica offered. "When I reached Dominica, I saw how people were moving in a country that was nice, quiet, and without violence," he reflected. "I chose to stay there."

His migration journey began with his sister obtaining a visa for him, and he quickly started navigating the local immigration system. Determined to stay, he applied for a residency permit, a process that required valid documentation, including a passport, police clearance, and financial statements.

Jean Claude's ability to navigate these steps underscores the importance of having clear and accessible migration channels, which enable smooth transitions for migrants.

Like many who migrate to a new country, Jean Claude faced challenges early on. His first impression of Dominica's lush greenery and winding roads left him in awe, though there was also an element of uncertainty. Adjusting to the local culture meant learning a new language and finding ways to contribute to his new community. He gradually picked up English through interactions with friends and colleagues, demonstrating his willingness to embrace the cultural and social norms of his new home.

Integration, however, went beyond language acquisition. Jean Claude's adaptability and strong work ethic stood out as he took on multiple jobs, including construction, security, and gas station services. His philosophy was simple yet profound: "Anywhere I go, I try to fix myself. I don't say, 'I've never done this before, so I won't do it.' I work hard because I know I have to pay bills."

Jean Claude's entrepreneurial spirit also came to the fore when he partnered with a local entrepreneur to open a barbershop. This venture not only provided financial stability but also highlighted his ability to create opportunities for himself and contribute to the local economy.

Family has always been central to Jean Claude's journey. After establishing himself in Dominica, he returned to Haiti following Hurricane Maria to reunite with his family. In 2018, he brought his two sons to live with him. Their integration into Dominica's education system came with its own challenges, particularly due to language barriers, but Jean Claude's unwavering support ensured their success. His dedication to their well-being underscores the importance of family in his life and his determination to build a better future for them.

Beyond his immediate family, Jean Claude found a sense of belonging within the broader Dominican community. He described Dominica as a "safe country" with welcoming people, adding, "Everywhere I go, I have friends." His ability to forge strong relationships across the island reflects the importance of social connections in successful integration.

Jean Claude's experience highlights the need for accessible and transparent migration systems. While his own journey through the immigration process was straightforward, he acknowledged that changes to the system have made it more stringent for newcomers. Efficient migration systems not only ease the transition for migrants but also benefit host countries by minimizing misunderstandings and fostering smoother integration.

For Jean Claude, having valid permits and proper documentation enabled him to build a stable life, contribute to the local economy, and become a valued member of Dominican society.

Jean Claude's story demonstrates the contributions migrants can make to their new homes. His resilience, entrepreneurial spirit, and commitment to community demonstrate how migration, when managed effectively, can enrich a country's social and economic fabric. His journey serves as an inspiration for other migrants seeking a better life and as a reminder of the value migrants bring to their host communities.

His story exemplifies the potential for positive integration when migrants are met with opportunity and understanding. For Jean Claude, Dominica has become more than just a place to live—it is a home where he can dream, work, and build a future for his family. His story echoes the aspirations of countless migrants worldwide, proving that migration, when nurtured with care and opportunity, is a pathway to growth and transformation.

DOMINICA IS HOME

DID YOU KNOW...

Labour Migration, Forced Migration, International Retirement Migration (IRM), and Internal Migration make up the four main types of migration globally!

Here's a snapshot of the main drivers of migration into Dominica

- Dominica's natural beauty is a draw for digital nomads and other migrants who want to experience working in the "Nature Isle".
- Entrepreneurial migrants move to Dominica to start businesses that provide limited and unavailable products and services.
- Dominica provides peace, a better quality of life, and a hopeful future for migrants from politically unstable, war-torn countries.

R

egional Workshop on Disaster Displacement, Disaster Risk Reduction, and Human Security

The Republic of Trinidad and Tobago welcomed a two-day Regional Workshop on Disaster Displacement, Disaster Risk Reduction, and Human Security from May 8 - 9, 2024. The workshop aimed to address critical issues related to human mobility, human security threats and disaster risk reduction in the Caribbean Region. The event was organized by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) in collaboration with the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Commission and the Platform on Disaster Displacement (PDD). The joint programme is funded by the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security.

The initiative underscores the importance of proactive measures and collaborative efforts in mitigating the impact of disasters on Caribbean SIDS and ensuring the safety and well-being of communities. In his remarks, The Honourable Fitzgerald Hinds, Minister of National Security of Trinidad and Tobago, noted that “This workshop provides all nations present, with the unique opportunity to pursue collectively a program of activities to fortify the intricacies of cross border evacuation measures and to ensure the safety and well-being of all individuals within our borders during times of crisis. This is of particular relevance as the complex multi-hazard environment within which we, as Caribbean Small Island Developing States exists, is disproportionately exposed to threats and shocks.”

According to Strategic Advisor to the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Commission on Migration and Gender, Dr. Natasha Mortley “while the OECS sub-region continues to be challenged by a lack of comprehensive empirical data on human mobility, migration, climate and environmental crises, a few things are very clear. The Small Island Developing States (SIDS) of the sub-region are severely affected by a wide range of environmental and climate hazards, which drive multiple forms of human insecurity and have devastating impacts on our people.”



Dr. Natasha Mortley
*Strategic Advisor to the
OECS Commission on
Migration and Gender*

“
The Small Island Developing States (SIDS) of the sub-region are severely affected by a wide range of environmental and climate hazards

The event was designed to raise awareness on human mobility and the relevance of the human security approach in disaster risk reduction. A tabletop simulation exercise was conducted to test the Cross-border Evacuation Protocols and to enhance regional and national stakeholders' understanding of the measures provided.

This exercise also provided participants with an opportunity to offer recommendations to enhance these protocols to ensure more effective and efficient response mechanisms during times of disaster. Participants and stakeholders also examined the UNDRR's Disaster Resilience Scorecard for Cities to address the complex challenges posed by hazards in the region.



Akeisha Benjamin, Project Officer for Montserrat Red Cross indicated that “the information given is indeed critical to the work that we do with the non-national population and being introduced to new tools and protocols is indeed something that I would be advocating for with our national disaster agency”.

Representatives from The Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), the OECS Commission, government agencies, international organizations involved in disaster response and humanitarian assistance in the Caribbean were in attendance in person and virtually.



VIEW ONLINE





— “
We are all migrants and we have a responsibility to ensure that we add some value to what we do as a human civilization. In Dominica, we are building the first climate resilient country, not only resilient people but policy and financial resilience.

Honourable Cozier Frederick

Minister for the Environment, Rural Modernization, Kalinago Upliftment and Constituency Empowerment in Dominica

IOM partnered with the Government of Dominica at the Fourth Conference for Small Island Developing States (SIDS4) to highlight migration's role in building resilience. During a side event on "The Dominica Experience," Dominica's Foreign Minister, Dr. Vince Henderson, and Environment Minister, Cozier Frederick, emphasized the immense cost of climate resilience and the value of community and indigenous knowledge. Reflecting on Dominica's recovery after Hurricane Maria, the event underscored the need for fulfilled climate finance commitments. IOM reaffirmed its commitment to supporting SIDS through collaboration with governments and communities to achieve resilience and sustainable development.



VIEW ONLINE

2

M Managing Displacement and Planned Relocation in Disaster Prone Areas

Displacement and planned relocation are critical issues in the context of disasters brought about by natural hazards, particularly for those living in low-lying and hazardous areas. While some are forced to move due to immediate threats, many are reluctant to leave their homes despite significant danger. This reluctance can be attributed to economic, social, and psychological factors, including a strong attachment to place. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for developing effective disaster risk reduction strategies that address the needs and concerns of immobile and displaced populations.

During weather systems, residents living close to the sea are often advised to seek shelter elsewhere. The residents of Pottersville in Dominica have repeatedly been impacted by rough seas and storm surge during the passage of tropical cyclones. During Hurricane Maria in 2017, for example, many Pottersville residents suffered severe property losses and were temporarily displaced. Some sought refuge with family members, while others moved into shelters. Upon returning home, they discovered the full extent of their losses.



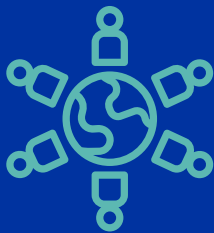
In July 2024, Hurricane Beryl devastated the islands of Carriacou, Union, and Petite Martinique. The Category 4 hurricane brought heavy rain, high winds, and rough seas. In Dominica, residents prepared for possible tropical storm conditions but nearly 24 hours after the passage of Hurricane Beryl, Pottersville residents experienced severe impacts of rough and above normal seas. Many lost their homes, businesses, and equipment essential for their livelihoods. Despite this, many residents expressed a strong desire to remain in their community.



Several factors contribute to the decision not to evacuate:



Economic Factors: Many individuals and families in disaster-prone areas are economically disadvantaged and lack the financial resources to relocate. The costs associated with transportation, securing new housing, and finding new employment can be prohibitive. For those relying on local jobs, particularly in agriculture or fishing, relocating may mean not only losing their homes but also their livelihoods. Economic stability is a significant factor that ties people to their current locations, making the prospect of moving daunting and impractical.



Social and Cultural Ties: Social networks and cultural ties play a crucial role in the reluctance to relocate. For many, their community is a source of support and identity. Leaving behind friends, family, and neighbours can be emotionally taxing and socially isolating. The sense of belonging and identity tied to a place can outweigh the perceived benefits of moving to a safer area. Additionally, some may not be able to relocate with pets or livestock. Immobile populations, including those with physical disabilities, often have no choice but to stay, leaving them to fend for themselves.



Psychological Factors: The fear of the unknown and the psychological comfort of familiar surroundings also contribute to the reluctance to move. People are generally resistant to change, especially when it involves uprooting their lives. The trauma and stress associated with displacement can be overwhelming, leading to a preference for staying put despite the risks. This is particularly true for older adults, who may find the prospect of starting anew especially challenging.



Attachment to Place: Place attachment refers to the emotional bond between people and their environment. This attachment can be particularly strong in areas with significant historical or sentimental value. Homes and neighbourhoods often hold memories and personal histories that are irreplaceable. The loss of a home can feel like the loss of one's identity and past, which can be a powerful deterrent to relocation.

To ensure adequate protection for disaster displaced persons, environmental migrants and vulnerable communities a holistic approach is essential. This approach should consider threats to human security and provide context-specific solutions in a participatory manner. Solutions should be people-centred and comprehensive prioritizing community engagement while ensuring all necessary partners are involved. The national disaster system should collaborate closely with local populations and vulnerable communities, ensuring that their voices are heard, and they have an input in the decision-making processes.



By involving affected communities, addressing their environmental, economic and personal concerns, and providing adequate infrastructure and support, the transition for persons who are displaced or who are being relocated can be made smoother and more sustainable.

Furthermore, planned relocation strategies must consider environmental security and be prevention-oriented, designed to enhance long-term resilience, reducing future risks and ensuring that relocated communities can thrive in their new environments.



VIEW ONLINE

3

Empowering Youth, Promoting Human Security

The rise in climate-related disasters has become a growing concern, particularly for vulnerable populations like children, people with disabilities and migrants. The 2024 International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction (IDDRR), observed on October 13, focuses on "Empowering the Next Generation for a Resilient Future." This theme encourages countries to empower their youth by providing education that not only helps them understand the risks posed by disasters, but also equips them to take proactive measures to protect themselves and their families. Promoting education that fosters resilience among youth is aligned with global efforts to mitigate risks under frameworks such as the UN Secretary-General's Early Warnings for All initiative and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. According to UNICEF, around one billion children worldwide face heightened risk, including displacement, due to climate impacts. These risks extend beyond immediate danger, impacting essential aspects of life such as education, healthcare, and nutrition. To protect young people from these cascading effects, it is essential to equip them with the skills and knowledge necessary to become agents of change within their communities.

Dominica's Kiddies Disaster Preparedness Summer Club: A Model for Youth Engagement

A prime example of youth empowerment in disaster preparedness is Dominica's Office of Disaster Management (ODM) Kiddies Disaster Preparedness Summer Club, which was launched at the Warner Primary School in July 2024.



Supported by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), this ODM initiative offered interactive sessions on disaster readiness and hands-on activities such as building emergency kits and engaging with local experts like the Dominica Fire and Ambulance Services and the Department of Social Services.

Joian Coipel, Junior programme Officer at the ODM, highlighted the value of this programme: "The ODM summer program has strengthened youth capacity by deepening their knowledge of disaster preparedness, promoting resilience, and developing essential life skills to assist their communities during emergencies."

The programme drew enthusiastic participation from both students and teachers, allowing children to grasp the significance of disaster preparedness while engaging in games and contests designed to strengthen their knowledge.

Warren Edwards, an intern with the ODM, reflected on the programme's success: "The concept of human security was well received by the youth. They quickly grasped its importance and even provided suggestions on how to strengthen human security in various fields. These young minds are Dominica's future."

The Intersection of Climate Change, Education, and Human Security

Human security, which is focused on enabling people to live free from fear, free from want, and to live in dignity, goes beyond immediate disaster preparedness. It encompasses the interconnected eight dimensions of security (environmental, economic, food, health, community, political, personal security, and access to technology), all of which are essential in a world facing increasing climate challenges. The collaboration between ODM and IOM during this summer's Kiddies Disaster Preparedness Club programme provided a holistic view of disaster risk reduction, helping participants to understand and assess the vulnerabilities in their communities.



Viola Pascal, Project Coordinator for IOM, stressed the importance of this collaboration:

"Climate-related events have significantly impacted the economic security, education, healthcare, and well-being of children and youth in the Caribbean. This collaboration provided another opportunity to strengthen local and national efforts in DRR, while affording youth a space to propose solutions to enhance their protection and empowerment."

Human Security as a Cornerstone for Youth Development

The core message of reducing threats to the human security of vulnerable people resonates strongly within the context of disaster risk reduction and the need to ensure no one is left behind. By harnessing the power of technology and equipping young people with the tools to understand the broader implications of climate change and human security threats, programmes like the ODM's Kiddies Disaster Preparedness Club are laying the foundation for a future where the next generation is not only prepared but also proactive in safeguarding their communities.

By empowering children and youth through education, countries can ensure that the next generation is well-equipped to navigate the uncertainties ahead and build stronger, more proactive communities.

As Dominica continues to engage with its youth on issues relating to disaster management, the country is setting an example of how education and youth participation can drive meaningful change in disaster risk reduction. The IDDRR 2024 theme serves as a reminder of the need to invest in the younger generation—not just as beneficiaries of disaster preparedness efforts, but as active contributors to a resilient future.



VIEW ONLINE

4

Advancing Resilience in the Caribbean: Human Security and Multi-Hazard Preparedness for a Changing Climate

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) jointly hosted a pivotal regional webinar on November 27, 2024, titled: "Human Security, Human Mobility, and Multi-Hazard Early Warning Systems to Achieve Resilience in the Caribbean Region". This dialogue brought together regional experts, community leaders, and policymakers to discuss the increasing threats of disaster displacement, environmental migration, and climate change in the Caribbean.

The webinar highlighted the importance of using the human security approach and the need for community participation to effectively address the multifaceted challenges faced by Caribbean nations.



In recent years, the Caribbean has witnessed a surge in displacement events, including those caused by hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, and volcanic eruptions. These events have had devastating consequences for affected populations, forcing many to seek refuge elsewhere. To mitigate the impact of these disasters and promote sustainable recovery, it is crucial to resource and implement multi-hazard early warning systems that are embedded with the human security principles and dimensions.

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Human security is a paradigm shift. It recognizes threats and insecurities that are interconnected, transversal, and often compounding.

Kana Kudo

Programme Management Officer, UN Trust Fund for Human Security

Viola Pascal, Project Coordinator at IOM, emphasized the need to consider the broader context of human security, which encompasses not only physical safety but also social, economic, and environmental well-being. "Human security threats increase for displaced people who are vulnerable not only to impending hazards but also to limitations in protection and empowerment initiatives. Thinking through the lens of human security ensures no one is left behind."

Kana Kudo, Programme Management Officer at the UN Trust Fund for Human Security, further elaborated on the concept of human security, highlighting its relevance to sustainable development. She stressed the importance of addressing the root causes of displacement and migration, such as poverty, inequality, and climate change. "Human security is a paradigm shift. It recognizes threats and insecurities that are interconnected, transversal, and often compounding. By placing displaced people and receiving communities at the heart of interventions, we can address vulnerabilities holistically and develop shared objectives for intergovernmental collaboration."

The role of communities in disaster preparedness was underscored by John Mussington, a marine biologist and community advocate from Antigua and Barbuda, who reflected on Hurricane Irma's impact: "Local governance represents and serves the needs of communities. Their inclusion in planning is absolutely essential. Barbuda's survival during Irma was due in part to years of preparation, where every household knew how to utilize warning systems and prepare for the worst."

Likewise, Michelle Forbes, Director of the National Emergency Management Organization (NEMO) in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, shared practical insights: "We've seen how regional coordination and inter-sectoral partnerships can strengthen our response to disasters. But building resilience must also happen within communities, empowering them to lead recovery efforts and adapt to challenges. Community resilience is key."

Experts stressed the compounded risks of climate change on vulnerable communities.

You really cannot build resilient communities without putting at the center, at its core, the full involvement of the persons who are most to be impacted by those decisions.



Clarence Henry
*Acting Head of the Regional
Integration Unit, OECS
Commission*

"Between 1950 and 2016, the Caribbean experienced 324 disasters, resulting in \$22 billion in economic losses and 250,000 lives lost. Climate change is not just a risk multiplier; it's creating new hazards. Deliberate and urgent action is required to minimize these risks and protect livelihoods." She further highlighted the role of the MCR2030 initiative in building urban resilience, explaining how disaster risk reduction can be integrated into city planning to protect people and infrastructure.



The webinar concluded with a lively Q&A session, where participants had the opportunity to ask questions and share their perspectives.



Dr. Juan Carlos, representing the Platform on Disaster Displacement (PDD), emphasized the importance of communication in disaster preparedness: "We must recognize that an effective warning and feedback system can support disaster personnel, first responders, and community volunteers in having an effective evacuation system and in dealing with the difficult part of getting people to move out of harm's way. The decision to evacuate could be made a little easier by having reliable and consistent information."

The moderator of the event, Dr. Clarence Henry, Acting Head of the Regional Integration Unit, OECS Commission, underscored the importance of partnerships:

"You really cannot build resilient communities without putting at the center, at its core, the full involvement of the persons who are most to be impacted by those decisions."

Collaboration among agencies, sectors, and governance levels is critical to addressing the multi-faceted challenges of disaster displacement and recovery.



VIEW ONLINE

Since 2001, the IOM Development Fund has provided a unique global resource aimed at supporting developing Member States in their efforts to strengthen their migration management capacity. With over 1000 projects implemented in more than 125 countries worldwide, the Fund has successfully addressed the capacity-development needs of eligible Member States by providing essential "seed funding" for innovative projects.

The Fund is designed to contribute to the harmonization of eligible Member State migration management policies and practices with their overall national development strategy. Priority projects are identified by Member States in coordination with IOM Offices worldwide and include activities that enhance migration management practices and promote humane and orderly migration.



PROJECTS INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING FOCUS AREAS:

- Counter-trafficking
- Enhancement of inter-governmental dialogue and cooperation
- Labour migration
- Migration and development
- Migration, environment and climate change
- Migration health
- Border management
- Policy and legal framework development
- Research and assessment
- Return and Re-integration on an exceptional basis, for projects focusing on government capacity development activities
- Emergency operations and migrant return schemes among others are not covered under the Fund (see Eligibility Criteria for a complete listing).

Eligible Member States can access one of two funding lines and projects range from USD 50,000 to USD 300,000 for national projects and USD 100,000 to USD 400,000 for regional projects. Country eligibility is based on the most recent version of the list of low-income through to upper middle-income economies as designated by the World Bank. Equitable allocation of the funds across regions and within regions remains a core management principle in assessing requests for funding under the Fund. Enquiries and applications are accepted throughout the year.

The Guidelines Section provides further details on the operation of the two funding lines, including eligibility criteria, funding limits, timing and process of decision-making and project tracking.



VIEW ONLINE

5

ISLAND JOURNEYS: FOSTERING INTEGRATION THROUGH FASHION

Fashion steps onto the limelight as a surprising yet powerful tool for integration. It celebrates cultural diversity, fosters a sense of belonging, and enriches the nation's cultural fabric. A local entrepreneur took the initiative, creating "Dominica's Next Supermodel/Dominica's Next Male Model" (DNSM) to diversify the faces of fashion and modeling in Dominica. This year, for the first time, four migrants participated.

Today we explore the stories of Peterson Marius, Louvaincy Acecus, Yaimiara Ana Hernandez Fuentes, and Cobensky Filsaime - aspiring models who participated in DNSM. A vibrant showcase of the power of fashion to bridge cultural divides and empower newcomers in Dominica.



PETERSON MARIUS

Dominica welcomed Marius in 2019. He, along with his younger brother, joined their mother who had built a new life here three years prior, having emigrated from Haiti.

The island's beauty quickly captured his heart, even as Dominican Creole, with its unique twists on Haitian Creole, initially posed a challenge. "The way they phrase things can completely change the meaning," Marius explains with a smile.

A recent high school graduate, Marius found Dominica an easy place to adapt to. His love for fashion led him to the DNSM competition. While securing sponsors for the event was not a breeze, the camaraderie he's found with his fellow models has become a true source of joy.



Peterson Marius
Dominica's Next Male Model

LOUVAINCY ACCEUS

Following in his father's footsteps was not just an aspiration for Acceus, it was a destiny that led him to Dominica. Years earlier, his father, a successful entrepreneur with two thriving businesses, had settled here. Acceus joined him at nine years old, already harbouring dreams of replicating his father's success.



Louvaincy Acceus
Dominica's Next Male Model

Dominica's initial embrace came with challenges. The language barrier demanded quick adaptation, both at school and in daily life. "It was tough," Acceus admits, "but Dominica offered peace and freedom. I joined a football team and a dance group - anything to connect." This island became his home, a place where he felt he truly belonged.

The modeling competition presented an opportunity to highlight not just himself, but also his family's legacy. Kings Garment, his father's successful business, became a driving force for his participation. "My father built this," Acceus explains, a touch of pride in his voice. "After he passed away, I became the face of the business. People call me 'King's son' everywhere I go, and that inspires me to make him proud and carve my own path." Acceus captured the "Best Colour Block Fashion" and "Best RococoPunk Fashion" awards and placed first runner-up.



Yaimara Ana Hernandez Fuentes
Dominica's Next Super Model

YAIMARA ANA HERNANDEZ FUENTES

A breath of fresh air, both literally and figuratively, awaited Yaimara Ana Hernandez Fuentes when she arrived in Dominica less than a year ago. Hailing from Cuba, she craved the experience of living in an English-speaking country and immersing herself in a new culture. The strong diplomatic ties between Dominica and Cuba provided the perfect springboard for her move. "Dominica's greenery hit me the moment I opened my window," Hernandez-Fuentes laughs, "such a vibrant place!" The abundance of fresh produce in the open markets also came as a delightful surprise.

Like any new environment, Dominica presented its own set of adjustments. Hernandez-Fuentes quickly found a welcoming community, forging friendships with kind and helpful locals. Landing a server job at a local restaurant further solidified her sense of belonging. Hernandez-Fuentes, with over a decade of experience in Cuba's fashion and art scene, jumped at the chance to participate in the DNSM competition. The biggest hurdle? Striking a balance between her two jobs and the demands of preparing for the show. "Supporting my family back in Cuba while establishing myself here can be stressful at times," she admits.



Cobensky Filsaime
Dominica's Next Male Model

COBENSKY FILSAIME

A product of the vibrant Caribbean diaspora, Cobensky Filsaime embodies the spirit of cultural exchange. Born in Cuba and raised in Haiti, Dominica became his home when he arrived for high school. While initial integration presented some challenges, Filsaime's perseverance and openness helped him find his place on the island.

Fashion had always held a special allure for Filsaime. Inspired by models in Cuba and a family member in Haiti, he dreamt of taking center stage himself. "I used to watch people modeling before in Cuba, in Haiti I have a family member who modelled, I wanted to do that," explains Filsaime. His friends, recognizing his unique style, enthusiastically encouraged him to participate in the DNSM competition. The road was not always smooth, with a last-minute sponsor loss adding to the pre-show hurdles.

Fashion bridges cultures! It empowers migrants, celebrates their styles, and fosters inclusion. This vibrant exchange can fuel economic growth and foster respect. By embracing migrant threads, societies weave a richer and more unified cultural tapestry, a vibrant testament to human creativity. Imagine a world where every runway reflects the richness of our global village – a dazzling display of unity woven from diverse threads. Let fashion be a bridge that leads us there.

DOMINICA IS HOME
CHALLENGES SURROUNDING MIGRATION AND SOLUTIONS

Language
The communication barrier created when migrants do not speak the language of the country they move to can affect their ability to access services and find good work and housing.
Language classes, watching and listening to local programmes, and socializing with locals will improve language-speaking skills, increased social interactions and increased quality of life.

Work
Finding a job that pays well is one of the greatest challenges migrants to a new country face. They usually accept whatever is offered to them for work, and these are often jobs locals do not want. Poor language proficiency, discrimination, and exploitation also make it difficult for migrants to move to better-paid positions.
However, socialising and networking with the local community and studying to improve language proficiency can significantly improve job prospects.

Services
Several barriers prevent migrant access to the services they need. These include a lack of information and understanding about their rights and entitlements, as well as language and cost barriers.
It is important to note that all migrants in Dominica, regardless of migration status, can access Government-led health services under the same conditions as nationals, and all have equitable access to social protection.

Culture
One of the greatest challenges migrants face is overcoming cultural barriers. When it is important to maintain your cultural traditions, it is equally important to adapt to the culture of your new home.
Make it a point to learn about their customs, social norms, behaviour and values as this will make integration and settling in your new country easier.



VIEW ONLINE



Department Of
Social Services



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AWARENESS + ACTION = CHANGE

It's important to be **AWARE** of what abuse is, and the signs, so that you can take the **ACTION** needed to **CHANGE** your, or a loved one's situation for the better.

If you need guidance on how to help someone being abused please contact the Ministry of Health Wellness and Social Services to find out what actions may be taken for change.

dss@dominica.gov.dm +1(767) 266 3080



**IMPROVING SOCIAL
PROTECTION FOR
LOCAL AND MIGRANT
COMMUNITIES IN
DOMINICA**

Improving access to gender-sensitive protection services in
Dominica — especially for the most vulnerable.



6 Campaign Aimed At Eliminating Abuse in Dominica



“

One of the objectives is to improve service delivery to victims of gender-based violence, child abuse, mental health, and substance abuse.

Hon. Kent Edwards

Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Health, Wellness and Social

A safer Dominica for all, particularly children, and other vulnerable members of society - the elderly, disabled persons, women, and minority groups, including migrants - is at the heart of a new campaign launched on 13 June by the Ministry of Health, Wellness and Social Services.



AWARENESS

+



ACTION

=



CHANGE

With its slogan “Awareness + Action = Change”, the campaign is made possible with funding from the International Organisation of Migration, UN Migration (IOM), and aims through education, to spur a national effort to take action toward eliminating all forms of abuse in Dominica.

The parliamentary secretary also noted that increased reports of child abuse are among several reasons that led to a restructuring of the Government's Social Welfare Division, which has been renamed the Department of Social Services, and is now comprised of four specialized units, which include the Social Welfare Unit, Probation Unit, Child Protection Unit, and the Counseling Unit.



To enhance the important role which data collection plays in any institution, a Data Officer has been included among the staff of the Department,” the parliamentary secretary said. “A Communications Officer is also employed with a view to the dissemination of relevant information.”

Speaking on behalf of the IOM, Project Coordinator, Vynliz Dailey, underscored the importance of the project, stating that it is not merely an initiative, but concretizes IOM's commitment to working with the Government of Dominica to ensure no one is left behind, particularly the most vulnerable in society, as efforts progress to build safer communities.



“One of the most critical aspects of our project is the emphasis on partnerships. We recognize that no single entity can address the complex issues of social protection alone,” Dailey said. “It requires the combined efforts of government, civil society, international organizations, and the private sector.”

“

These partnerships bring together diverse perspectives, resources, and expertise, that enable the creation of more comprehensive, effective solutions that drive meaningful progress and change.

Vynliz Dailey
IOM Project Coordinator



It was also outlined during the launch that one key partnership is with the media, since their dissemination of campaign information and materials, and informed reporting, is critical to raising awareness, as outlined in the “Awareness + Action = Change” equation.

To this end, IOM will be funding webinars designed to assist media practitioners with safely and effectively reporting on such sensitive topics as child and domestic abuse.

In closing the campaign launch, Glenora Pacquette, Coordinator, Social Services Unit, implored all Dominicans to pay close attention to, and where necessary, act on the initiatives and information provided as part of the communications campaign, since this level of public involvement is critical to the Department’s efforts “to help build a caring, inclusive, and resilient society in which everyone can live with dignity.”

The launch event culminated with an open house at the Ministry of Health, Wellness and Social Services, during which members of the public, and the media were invited to visit each unit under the Social Welfare Division to gain more information about what they do, and how the respective units can be effectively utilized to enhance efforts to end abuse.



VIEW MORE



Department Of
Social Services



THIS IS ABUSE

Every Dominican deserves a safe home free from all forms of violence and abuse. Being aware of what constitutes abuse, is the first step toward taking the action needed for change.

5 Types of Abuse



If someone is hurting you emotionally with their words, by constantly criticising you, ignoring you or calling you names, or if threats are made to your safety, it is **EMOTIONAL ABUSE!**



If the things you need to feel safe, like food, shelter and clothing are withheld from you, if you do not receive the care you need when you are ill, and if you are made to feel unsafe by being left alone for a long time, it is **NEGLECTFUL ABUSE!**



If someone hurts your body with their physical actions, including hitting, pinching, shaking, shoving, biting, burning or kicking you, it is **PHYSICAL ABUSE!**



If you do not give consent to be touched on your breasts or genitals, observed while naked, or shown pornography, and if you are forced to engage in sexual activities, it is **SEXUAL ABUSE!**



If someone often yells at you, speaks to you in a way that instills fear, or repeatedly uses words to hurt you, it is **VERBAL ABUSE!**



AWARENESS + ACTION = CHANGE

If you believe you are experiencing any of these forms of abuse, or are aware that someone may be, please contact the Ministry of Health Wellness and Social Services to find out what actions may be taken for change.

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T **Training of Trainers Program on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support MHPSS and Social Protection**

The successful completion of the "Building Capacity for Mental Health and Psychosocial Support and Social Protection: A Training of Trainers Programme" marks a significant milestone in enhancing community resilience and support systems in Dominica. The programme, which ran from August 6–8, 2024, brought together professionals and community leaders to develop essential skills in delivering mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) services in humanitarian settings. The training was developed by the International Organization for Migration in close collaboration with the Department of Social Services.



PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

The provision of MHPSS services is crucial in communities affected by conflict, disasters, and other traumatic events.



Recognizing the need for sustainable, community-driven approaches to mental health and psychosocial support, the Training of Trainers (ToT) programme was designed to empower participants with the skills and knowledge necessary to train others in providing these critical services.

The programme utilized a blend of interactive sessions, experiential learning, and multimedia resources. Participants engaged in role-plays, group discussions, and practical exercises, reinforcing their learning and building confidence in their ability to train others.

“The programme specifically targeted professionals and community leaders with backgrounds in health, education, social work, or related fields who are committed to promoting mental health, psychosocial support, and delivering social services within their communities. This diverse group of participants was selected for their potential to lead community-based MHPSS initiatives,” said Xanthoula Ioannidou, clinical psychologist and IOM Facilitator.

The ToT programme aimed to achieve several key objectives:

- Enhance participants' understanding of MHPSS principles and practices.
- Develop participants' skills in providing psychological first aid and other support mechanisms.

- Promote community-based approaches to mental health and psychosocial support.
- Ensure sustainability by building local capacity for ongoing MHPSS training.

By the conclusion of the program, participants had achieved the following outcomes:

- A comprehensive understanding of MHPSS, including its principles, practices, and applications in humanitarian settings.
- Practical skills in communication, psychological first aid, and community engagement.
- The ability to independently conduct MHPSS training sessions, ensuring the sustainability of these initiatives within their communities.
- Strengthened community resilience through effective MHPSS interventions.
- Formation of a network of trained MHPSS trainers for ongoing support and resource sharing.



Post-Training Implementation

Upon the training's completion, six participants were successfully trained and are now equipped to extend their expertise to broader communities. These newly trained MHPSS trainers will commence their community facilitation sessions in the out districts of Grand Fond and Portsmouth. These sessions will focus on empowering local communities to support their own mental health and psychosocial well-being, furthering the reach and impact of the program.



The Training of Trainers (ToT) Programme on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) and Social Protection has not only equipped participants with the necessary skills but also laid the groundwork for sustainable, community-based mental health initiatives. The International Organization for Migration The Ministry of Social Services leads this crucial initiative with the support of the International Organization for Migration.



ARE YOU AWARE?



IOM
UN MIGRATION



Sudden or gradual decrease in self-esteem in once-confident person.



Excuses and self-blaming for frequent bruises or injuries.



Overly concerned about upsetting parents or partner, and excessive check-ins.



Often disheveled, poor hygiene, appears malnourished.

7 Signs a Friend or Loved One is Being Abused



Unexplained, frequent absences from school or work.



Oversized clothing & excessive coverups could be hiding bruises & injuries.



Unusually afraid of loud noises & sudden movements.

AWARENESS + ACTION = CHANGE

8

Wrap Around Programme (WAP) Pilot National Youth Initiative

The Probation Unit of Dominica's Ministry of Social Services successfully concluded its pilot National Youth Initiative: Wrap Around Programme (WAP) for Juveniles.

The programme aimed to equip at-risk youth with essential skills and knowledge to promote positive behaviour and reduce recidivism. IOM Dominica partnered with the Ministry to create an enhanced module within the programme that focused on social integration, cultural diversity and preventing sexual abuse and exploitation.

THE DATA

In reviewing the data collected for juvenile offences from the Honourable Court for the year 2022, thirty-nine (39) juveniles were processed through the Probation Unit for Pre-Sentence Reports.

Ninety (90) offences were recorded for the thirty-nine (39) juveniles with theft, wounding, throwing missiles, battery and malicious damage being the top five (5) offences. Majority of these juvenile offenders are enrolled at secondary schools as such, the Probation Unit was moved to create and implement a prevention and rehabilitation programme to curb recidivism among juvenile offenders and to assist juveniles at-risk from becoming involved with the justice system.



[VIEW MORE](#)

ADDRESSING JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

The programme targeted 57 students aged 12-18 from a high school which previously reported many juvenile offenders. WAP focused on four key areas:

- **Equipping Juveniles:** Students participated in workshops on anger management, conflict resolution, coping mechanisms, and social skills development.
- **Empowering Parents:** Parents and guardians receive guidance on effective parenting skills, building emotional bonds, and supporting their adolescents.
- **School Collaboration:** The programme fostered collaboration between the Probation Unit and the high school to identify and address early signs of anti-social behaviour.
- **Community Engagement:** Community members gained a better understanding of juvenile justice and how to support at-risk youth.

“

44 students have successfully completed the programme.



Ms. Anestin Baron
*Principal Probation Officer
Department of Social
Services Dominica*

POSITIVE OUTCOMES AND FUTURE PLANS

The pilot programme utilized interactive sessions, video presentations, discussions, and role-playing exercises. Participants were evaluated through questionnaires and a creative competition to gauge the programme's effectiveness.

Based on the pilot's success, the Ministry of Social Services plans to nationalize the Wrap Around Programme, expanding it to all secondary schools across Dominica. This comprehensive approach aims to create a network of support for at-risk youth, promoting positive choices and a brighter future.

The National Youth Initiative: Wrap Around Programme represents a significant step forward in Dominica's juvenile justice system. In moving forward, the intent is to form closer partnerships with the Ministry of Education in ensuring long-term success and possible extension of the programme. The intent is to form partnerships with stakeholders external to the school administration, including the Dominica Planned Parenthood Association, Drug Prevention Unit, and the Dominica Cadet Corp. By equipping young people with the tools they need to succeed and encouraging collaboration between schools

KNOW THE RESOURCES



Easily accessible national support services and prevention programmes are vital to abuse prevention efforts.



The Bureau of Gender Affairs

Ensures gender equality in public policy and national development programs, and provides support to families experiencing domestic violence.



The Child Care and Protection Unit

Conducts intervention, prevention, and rehabilitation programmes aimed at positively changing the lives of children at risk of being harmed and their families.



The Counseling Unit

Offers individual, couple, family, and group counseling, designed to help navigate through life's challenges, find inner strength, and move towards a happier, healthier life.

Take action with these 5 resources!



The Social Welfare Unit

Provides public assistance, emergency response, and other services that enhance the quality of life of vulnerable members of society.



The Probation Unit

Formulates and implements preventive, diversionary, rehabilitative, and reintegration programmes for juvenile offenders and youth at risk of offending.



AWARENESS + ACTION = CHANGE

Awareness of resources available to help prevent abuse is vital to enabling you to take the action needed for change. For more information on accessing these services please contact the Ministry of Health Wellness and Social Services.

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Transformative Training Launched to Enhance Social Protection Services

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) Dominica, in collaboration with the Department of Social Services, recently hosted a transformative three-day training focused on improving social protection services for both local and migrant communities. Led by Dr. Schuyler Esprit of the Create Caribbean Research Institute, the training aimed to develop standardized operating procedures (SOPs) to streamline service delivery and enhance the overall well-being of vulnerable populations.

The training was informed by a comprehensive study conducted by Dr. Esprit's team, which assessed the current state of social services in Dominica. The research identified key gaps and challenges, providing valuable insights to inform the development of effective SOPs.

“Research tells a story, and this training is about using that story to empower participants to take ownership of the process,” said Dr. Esprit. “By understanding the findings and working collaboratively, we can create policies and procedures that lead to tangible improvements.”



The training sessions were highly interactive, with participants actively engaged in discussions and group activities. The use of practical templates and real-world examples helped participants to develop SOPs tailored to their specific needs.

Vynliz Dailey, Project Coordinator for IOM Dominica, emphasized the importance of collaborative efforts: “Seeing this collaboration unfold is inspiring, and it highlights the importance of teamwork in achieving shared goals.”

Representatives from various units under the department participated in the training, including Glenora Pacquette, Coordinator of Social Welfare Services, and Keisha Polydore, a social worker at the Bureau of Gender Affairs.



[VIEW MORE](#)



Dr. Schuyler Esprit
Training Facilitator and
Researcher at The Create
Caribbean Research Institute

“I’m looking forward to creating SOPs that enhance the services we provide and guide our work more effectively,” said Glenora Pacquette.

Keisha Polydore added, “The data highlights the challenges we face as frontline workers. I hope this training leads to faster and more effective support for the vulnerable populations we serve.”

By the end of the training, participants had drafted SOPs for critical areas such as child care and protection, support for at-risk youth, social welfare, assistance for abuse survivors, and elderly care.

These SOPs will serve as a roadmap for enhancing service delivery and promoting collaboration across departments.

“**I want participants to leave this training not only with actionable SOPs but also with a renewed sense of purpose and community.**”



Dr. Esprit expressed optimism about the initiative's potential impact: “I want participants to leave this training not only with actionable SOPs but also with a renewed sense of purpose and community. Together, we can create a system that better serves the people of Dominica.”



DEVELOPMENT OF THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR IN DOMINICA BY STRENGTHENING MIGRATION GOVERNANCE

The project seeks to boost the resilience of labor-intensive and subsistence farming in Dominica by integrating migration into the agricultural sector's development. It focuses on leveraging migration to enhance productivity and sustainability. The initiative aims to strengthen the sector's capacity to adapt and thrive.



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Sowing success: Leveraging Migration to Strengthen Dominica's Agricultural Sector

Dominica, renowned as the "Nature Island of the Caribbean," possesses untapped agricultural potential that remains integral to its economic and sustainable development goals. However, like many small island developing states, Dominica faces challenges such as labor shortages, aging farmer populations, and vulnerabilities to climate change. To overcome these barriers, we must embrace the power of partnerships, particularly in migration management, to breathe new life into agriculture and secure our future as a nation.

One of the most pressing issues in Dominica's agriculture is a declining labor force. Many farmers are nearing retirement, and younger Dominicans are increasingly opting for urban opportunities or emigrating in search of more lucrative jobs. Fields that once bustled with activity now lie fallow. However, migration could provide a lifeline. Regional agreements within CARICOM and international agreements could allow for the structured movement of labor across borders, bringing in workers during critical periods such as planting and harvesting seasons. These agreements would not only address labor shortages but also foster regional economic integration.



The benefits of migration-focused partnerships extend beyond agriculture to Dominica's overall development objectives.

A thriving agricultural sector bolstered by these alliances can catalyze economic growth, strengthen food security, and support rural development. Moreover, by addressing labor shortages and fostering innovation, Dominica can enhance its resilience against external shocks, such as natural disasters and fluctuating global markets.

International Organizations can play a pivotal role in this transformation. This is why the International Organization for Migration (IOM) is partnering with the Government of Dominica to address critical challenges in the country's agricultural sector through strategic migration management. This collaboration aims to create structured pathways for attracting both skilled and unskilled migrant workers to fill labor gaps while ensuring fair treatment and integration into local communities.



Together, IOM and the government are also developing programmes to enhance agricultural productivity by updating policies and procedures, supporting climate-resilient practices, and facilitating access to resources for both migrants and local farmers.

This partnership underscores a shared commitment to revitalizing Dominica's agriculture while fostering sustainable development and economic growth.

The private sector, too, must be part of the equation. Businesses involved in agro-processing, export, and supply chain management stand to benefit from a revitalized agricultural workforce. Public-private partnerships (PPPs) could help provide migrants with the resources they need to thrive, such as housing, healthcare, and on-the-job training. This approach would not only create a more stable workforce but also unlock new economic opportunities for Dominica, enabling the country to expand its reach into global markets for organic and niche agricultural products.



Undoubtedly, Dominica's path forward lies in collaboration. By aligning migration management with agricultural development, the country can address labor shortages, foster innovation, and build resilience in the face of climate change. Partnerships at the local, regional, and international levels will be key to ensuring that Dominica's agricultural sector not only survives but thrives, securing a sustainable future for the island and its people.

For a nation whose identity is so deeply rooted in the land, these efforts are not just an economic imperative—they are a call to preserve Dominica's legacy for generations to come.

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ISLAND JOURNEYS: OLYMPIC GOLD TRIPLE JUMPER, THEA LAFOND- GADSON, EMBRACING HER JOURNEY AS A MIGRANT ATHLETE

Dominican-born Thea Lafond-Gadson's story as an athlete who migrated to the United States is an inspiring example of overcoming obstacles, chasing dreams, and discovering a new home in sports. Her story is a compelling narrative of resilience, determination, courage and cultural integration.

One of the significant hurdles Thea faced as a migrant athlete was the sense of being disadvantaged. "One of the biggest challenges that I face as a migrant athlete was often feeling sometimes a little, like we were given I was given the shorter end of the stick in some situations," Thea shares. Lacking access to resources and guidance that many of her peers enjoyed, she often felt like an outsider. Her parents, unfamiliar with the athletic world, couldn't provide the support and knowledge needed to navigate her early career.



Despite these obstacles, Thea found strength and built her confidence. "I was lucky to have parents that naturally did that, that instilled confidence in me that told me that I could achieve great things," she reflects. The increase in funding from her home country - Dominica Olympic Committee also played a crucial role in levelling the playing field, allowing her to focus on her athletic development without the constant worry of resources.

Sports has been a powerful tool for Thea in integrating into American society. "My involvement in sports has helped me to integrate a lot within, you know, just the US in general," she notes. The American passion for athletics opened many doors and created numerous opportunities for her. Engaging in sports sparked conversations and helped break down barriers, fostering a sense of belonging.

"One thing I quickly realized, especially when it came to America is that the US loves athletics, they love sports in general," Thea explains. Her participation in sports allowed her to connect with people, reducing the feeling of being different and easing her integration process.

While thriving in her new environment, Thea remains deeply connected to her cultural roots. "There are two ways that I really feel that I stay connected to my cultural roots while competing internationally. One is trying to find some good Caribbean food," she shares. The comfort of familiar food brings a sense of home, even when she is far away. Additionally, social media serves as a bridge to her culture, enabling her to receive support and encouragement from her compatriots.

Reading messages and good wishes from people in Dominica makes her feel less lonely and reminds her that she is not alone in her journey. This connection to her roots provides an extra boost of motivation, knowing she has the support of her community behind her.

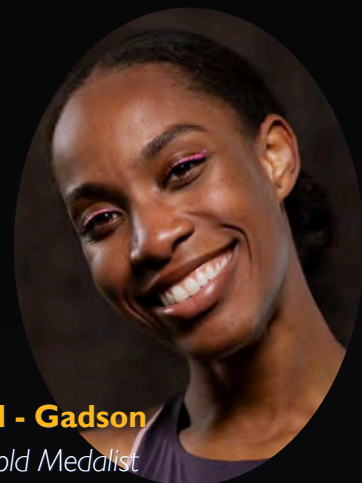
Thea's experiences as a migrant and professional athlete have shaped her identity. Initially feeling out of place on the global stage, she has grown to embrace her role as a representative of Dominica. "As I've grown up, and as I've gotten more and more of these experiences, I realized what a privilege it really is to be the one here in these spaces," she says.

Her success in sports has turned her into an official ambassador for Dominica, showcasing the nation's potential and beauty to the world. "I believe my success in sports reflects very highly on Dominica," she asserts. She won gold in Triple Jump at the 2024 World Indoor Championship in Glasgow in March and gold at the 2024 Paris Olympics in August. Thea takes pride in putting Dominica on the map and hopes to inspire others to explore and appreciate her homeland.

Thea's message to aspiring athletes from Dominica is one of perseverance and ambition. "Remember that practice makes permanent, not perfect," she advises, emphasizing the importance of consistent effort and good habits. She encourages young athletes to think big and utilize all available resources, reminding them that the world is full of opportunities.

Through her journey, Thea Lafond-Gadson exemplifies the transformative power of sports in bridging cultural divides, fostering personal growth, and inspiring future generations. Her story is a testament to the strength and resilience of migrant athletes, and her success continues to shine a spotlight on the vibrant culture and potential of Dominica.

“
I believe my success in sports reflects very highly on Dominica.”



Thea Lafond - Gadson

Olympic Triple-Gold Medalist



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MIGRATION

GOVERNANCE

INDICATORS



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ISLAND JOURNEYS: FROM NEW YORK TO DOMINICA



Driven by a desire for a more meaningful existence and a deep appreciation for nature, Amber Oxley and Simon Morris, two former New Yorkers, embarked on a life-altering journey to the serene island of Dominica. Their bold decision to trade the bustling city life for the tranquility of the Caribbean was fueled by a shared passion for adventure and a desire to connect with nature.

Amber explains, "It wasn't about escaping the city; it was about embracing a different way of life." She was captivated by the island's natural beauty, friendly locals, and slower pace. The decision to relocate was a leap of faith but one that has proven to be incredibly rewarding.

Despite the geographical shift, Simon continues to work remotely as a TV producer, while Amber has transitioned into entrepreneurship.

Together, they run Eco Cottages and a local gin distillery, embracing the island's natural beauty and rich cultural heritage.

The couple's move to Dominica was not merely a lifestyle choice but also a commitment to community and cultural exchange.

Actively seeking to integrate into the local community, they have built strong relationships with locals and embraced Dominican culture.

In Calibishie, where they settled, their children quickly made friends at school. For Simon, the process was a bit tougher. "Initially, my idea was to have a dinner party and invite people over—how you'd make friends in London or New York," he shares. Instead, he learned that socializing in a small community meant hanging out at the bar or playing dominoes. Simon emphasizes the importance of patience and humility in navigating cultural differences and forming meaningful connections.

The family has seamlessly integrated their business ventures into the local economy. By collaborating with local artisans, farmers, and businesses, they have created sustainable partnerships that benefit both the community and their enterprises.

Amber has found her passion in spirits, creating high-quality craft gin at SeaCliff Eco Cottages. As a female entrepreneur, she is breaking traditional gender roles in the spirits industry, inspiring women to pursue their dreams. "I love the reaction when people find out it's woman-made," she says, challenging assumptions that spirits are typically produced by men.



“ Take the leap and go for it. It takes courage and a bit of blind faith, but the rewards are immeasurable.

Amber and Simon also host retreats at the cottages—yoga, writing, and reading retreats—collaborating with local businesses to cater, lead tours, and participate in festivals. “It’s a new gin; it’s a local gin,” Amber shares with pride. For those considering a similar move, Amber and Simon offer valuable advice:

- Embrace patience, humility, and a willingness to learn.
- Build local friendships and immerse yourself in the culture.
- Be open to adapting to a slower pace of life.

Amber encourages others to "take the leap and go for it. It takes courage and a bit of blind faith, but the rewards are immeasurable."

Their story highlights how migrants can contribute positively to their host communities while pursuing their dreams. By combining professional expertise with a deep appreciation for Dominica’s natural beauty and culture, Amber and Simon have become an inspiring example of successful migration and sustainable living.

As they thrive on the island, their journey inspires others to explore their own paths and seek a more fulfilling existence.

DOMINICA IS HOME
REASONS FOR MIGRATION
 IOM UN MIGRATION

Did you know Labour Migration, Forced Migration, International Retirement Migration (IRM), and Internal Migration make up the four main types of migration globally?

Here's a snapshot of the main drivers of migration into Dominica

- Dominica's natural beauty is a draw for digital nomads and other migrants who want to experience working in nature. To date, ~ persons have entered Dominica on the "Work in Nature" Extended Stay Visa Programme, bringing with them valuable foreign exchange, and employment opportunities for Dominicans.]
- The absence, of limited availability of some products and services inspires entrepreneurial migrants to move to Dominica to start a business. This type of migration gives Dominicans access to products and services that were previously not available, or available in a limited capacity.
- War, civil unrest, and political instability cause many around the world to leave their origin-country. Some of them have found peace, a better quality of life, and hope for the future in Dominica.

The International Organization For Migration's work in Dominica would not be possible without the support of donors and partners.



Dominica





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